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imagery analysis report

**Construction Activity at Soviet
FORGER-Related Airfields (S)**

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CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITY AT SOVIET FORGER-RELATED AIRFIELDS (S)

1. (S/D) This report summarizes construction activity at FORGER-related airfields in the USSR since the fall of 1979 and reports the apparent use of the FORGER in a combat role in Afghanistan (Figure 1). The construction activity includes new or continued construction of short takeoff and landing (STOL) runways, construction of additional FORGER aircraft shelters, construction of probable air-to-surface missile (ASM) storage bunkers, resurfacing of vertical takeoff and landing (VTOL) pads, and the first identification of tactical air-to-surface missiles (TASM) at an operational FORGER airfield.

2. (S/D) The first FORGER-associated STOL runway (Figure 2) was completed at Saki Airfield [] USSR, in the fall of 1979. The runway was constructed of pierced-metal-planking (PMP) emplaced over concrete paving blocks and had runway markings with VTOL pads outlined at each end. The total length was approximately 342 meters with a width of 30 meters. Two ASM storage bunkers have also been identified at Saki Airfield. The bunkers are in the FORGER area at the southwest end of the airfield (Figure 3). Saki Airfield is a Soviet Naval Aviation facility which supports FORGER training operations. It is 23 nautical miles (nm) west-northwest of Simferopol in the Black Sea coastal area.

3. (S/D) Romanovka Airfield West [] an SNA base subordinate to the Soviet Pacific Fleet Air Force, serves as the shore base for the FORGER complement of a KIEV-Class CVSG operating in the Pacific Fleet area. STOL runway construction began at Romanovka Airfield West in mid-April 1980. All the concrete blocks and all or most of the PMP were in place [] Although the 242-meter-long STOL runway is 100 meters shorter than the one at Saki, it is the same width (30 meters) with a VTOL pad outlined at one end. The [] imagery also revealed a new high count of FORGER for this airfield (16 FORGER A and three FORGER B) and the first identification of TASM at a FORGER airfield. Four AS-7/-10 missiles and 17 AS-7/-10 shipping containers were on a hardstand near two bunkers under construction in the FORGER area (Figure 4). These two bunkers appeared to be the same type as the probable ASM storage bunkers previously identified at Saki Airfield. Romanovka Airfield West is 19 nm northeast of Vladivostok.

4. (S/D) While a STOL runway has not yet been identified at Malyavr Airfield [] there has been extensive PMP resurfacing activity. Malyavr Airfield is a FORGER base on the Kola Peninsula in the North European USSR and serves as home base for a KIEV-Class CVSG FORGER air unit when in port in the Murmansk area. Three contiguous VTOL pads were recently resurfaced at the southern end of the airfield. The surrounding area was also being covered with PMP. At the northern end of the airfield, PMP was being emplaced in a large area around two VTOL pads. Although the area is more than 300 meters long, there is as yet no evidence that it is designed for any purpose other than facilitating use of the VTOL pads. Imagery [] also revealed a new multibay FORGER shelter (the fourth for this airfield) under construction adjacent to the three existing FORGER shelters (Figure 5).

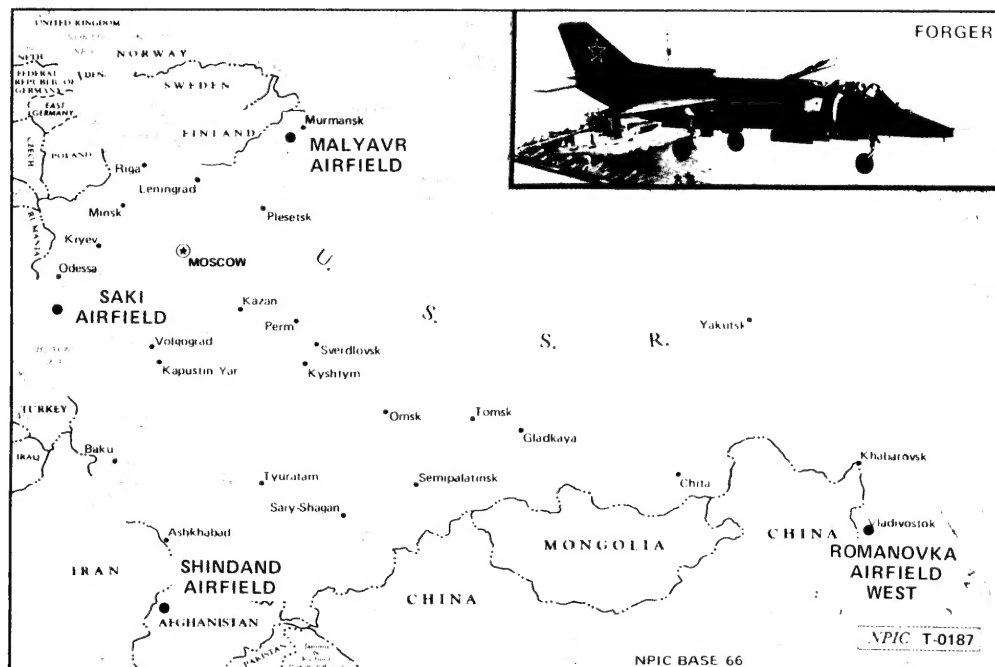


FIGURE 1. LOCATION OF SOVIET FORGER-RELATED AIRFIELDS

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5. (S/D) A STOL runway was identified under construction in April 1980 at Shindand Airfield [redacted]
[redacted] Afghanistan. Shindand has apparently been used to test the FORGER in combat opera-
tions (Figure 6).

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